

*The Visions of the Great Rememberer (with Visions of Cody,
Jack Kerouac), 1993*

Journals Mid-Fifties: 1954–1958, 1994

Luminous Dreams, 1997

Deliberate Prose: Selected Essays 1952–1995, 2000

Photography

Photographs, 1991

Snapshot Poetics, 1993

Vocal Words & Music

First Blues (Smithsonian/Folkways FSS 37560), 1981

*The Lion For Real (Mouth Almighty/Mercury Records),
1989, 1996.*

Howls, Raps & Roars (Fantasy), 1993

Hydrogen Jukebox, opera w/Philip Glass (Elektra Nonesuch), 1993

*Holy Soul Jelly Roll: Poems & Songs 1949–1993
(Rhino Records), 1994*

*The Ballad of the Skeletons, w/Paul McCartney, Philip Glass
(Mouth Almighty/Mercury), 1996*

Howl, U.S.A., Kronos Quartet, Lee Hyla score (Nonesuch), 1996

Howl & Other Poems (Fantasy), 1998

Deliberate Prose

SELECTED ESSAYS
1952–1995

ALLEN
GINSBERG

EDITED BY
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New York



HarperCollins Publishers

2000

begun LSD experiments only after the Russians had ordered 50,000,000 doses from Sandoz? "No," he said unequivocally, it was not true: he himself had supervised all orders and shipments of Sandoz LSD in that era and the Russians neither ordered nor received any. Thus from the horse's mouth, this CIA alibi for fifties LSD mind-control experiments proves to be a hoax. At dinner, Dr. Hoffman said to the family of psychedelic veterans present that he felt not like "Godfather" but "more like a Grandfather."

My own conclusion parallel to Dr. Hoffman's is that LSD is OK because it teaches one not to cling to anything, including LSD. "I've always known the truth," one thinks high; that notion, dismissed for later recollection, emerges later as a guide-thought for most experimenters who like myself come to accept ordinary mind as working basis for infrequent later acid trips, charming as they are.

My experience has been that prolonged meditation practice, Buddhist style (centering on mindfulness of ongoing breath exhalation thru nostrils—*Samantha* practice or similar *zazen*) provides clarity of awareness that encompasses the LSD experience and eliminates, or makes transparent, any tendency toward fantasy or projection of thought-forms. Such meditation practice has the in-built advantage of continually "letting go" of thought-forms instead of clinging to them or solidifying them; thus hope and fear are dissolved. Intelligence is a "Sword of Non-Discrimination."

"If you see anything horrible, don't cling to it; if you see anything beautiful, don't cling to it," was advice given by Dudjom Rinpoche (Tibetan Buddhist Nyingmapa lineage meditation master) for my acid qualms of 1963.

Concentration on more advanced meditative visualization practice is not impeded; at least that was my experience in this case as a beginner in Vajrayana studies and amateur experimenter with LSD.

I recommend such traditional non-theistic *Samantha-vipassana* (mindfulness-insight) meditative training in advance for anyone inclined to experiment with psychedelic substances. In most cases that would provide a reliable "set," insuring tranquillity, spaciousness and open attitude: anxiety-insurance so to speak. Through instruction from an experienced practitioner one may correlate one's own notion of meditation with others' experience. This is a very light task, certainly less forbidding than an egocentric side-trip down Anxiety Alley.

Lest the trip recorded seem to contradict the above light-hearted

advice, dealing as it does with a perplexing condition of psychopolitical paranoia (to label it dourly), I would plead in advance, to the thoughtful reader, that the idea-succession is articulated quite playfully; the subject, of "serious" national importance, is treated with transparent humor. The composition, happily written on LSD, examples a direct aesthetic action influenced by a psychedelic drug, and provides a glimpse of some social history of LSD.

WRITTEN: June 29, 1978 as a preface to
"The Great Marijuana Hoax"

Unpublished

The Great Marijuana Hoax

(1966)

First Manifesto to End the Bringdown

The first half of the essay was written while the author was smoking marijuana.

7:38 P.M. Nov. 13, 1965

San Francisco, California, USA, Kosmos

How much to be revealed about marijuana especially in this time and nation for the *general* public! for the actual experience of the smoked herb has been completely clouded by a fog of dirty language by the diminishing crowd of fakers who have not had the experience and yet insist on being centers of propaganda about the experience. And the key, the paradoxical key to this bizarre impasse of awareness is precisely that the marijuana consciousness is one that, ever so gently, shifts the center of attention *from* habitual shallow purely verbal guidelines and repetitive secondhand ideological interpretations of experience to more direct, slower, absorbing, occasionally microscopically minute engagement with sensing phenomena during the high moments or hours after one has smoked.

One who has the experience needs no explanations in the world of explanatory language, which is, after all, a limited charming part of the whole phenomenal show of life. A few people don't *like* the experience

and report back to the language world that it's a drag and make propaganda against this particular area of nonverbal awareness. But the vast majority all over the world, who have smoked the several breaths necessary to feel the effect, adjust to the strangely familiar sensation of time slow-down, and explore this new space thru natural curiosity, report that it's a useful area of mind-consciousness to be familiar with, a creative show of the silly side of an awful big army of senseless but habitual thought-formations risen out of the elements of a language world: a metaphysical herb less habituating than tobacco, whose smoke is no more disruptive than insight—in short, for those who have made the only objective test, a vast majority of satisfied smokers.

This essay in explanation, conceived by a mature middle-aged gentleman, the holder at present of a Guggenheim Fellowship for creative writing, a traveler on many continents with experience of customs and modes of different cultures, is dedicated in the author's right mind (i.e., not high) to those who have *not* smoked marijuana, as an attempt to bridge the conceptual gap, or cultural gap as may be, to explain the misunderstanding that has too long existed between those who know what pot is by experience and those who don't know exactly what it is but have been influenced by sloppy, or secondhand, or unscientific, or (as in the case of drug-control bureaucracies) definitely self-interested language used to describe the marijuana high pejoratively. I offer the pleasant suggestion that a negative approach to the whole issue (as presently pertains to what are aptly called "square" circles in the USA) is not necessarily the best, and that it is time to shift to a more positive attitude toward this specific experience.¹ If one is not inclined to have the experience oneself, this is a free country and no one is obliged to have an experience merely because a great number of one's friends, family, or business acquaintances have had it and report themselves pleased. On the other hand, an equal respect and courtesy is required for the sensibilities of one's familiars for whom the experience has not been closed off by the door of choice.

The main negative mythic images of the marijuana state that the general public is familiar with emanate from one particular source: the U.S. Treasury Department Narcotics Bureau.² If the tendency (a return to common sense) to leave the opiate problem with qualified MD's prevails, the main function of this large bureau will shift to the persecution of marijuana. Otherwise, the bureau will have no function except as a

minor tax office for which it was originally purposed, under the aegis of Secretary of the Treasury. Following Parkinson's Law that a bureaucracy will attempt to find work for itself, or following a simpler line of thought, that the agents of this bureau have a business interest in perpetuating the idea of a marijuana "menace" lest they lose their employment, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a great deal of the violence, hysteria and energy of the antimarijuana language propaganda emanating from this source has as its motive a rather obnoxious self-interest, all the more objectionable for its tone of moralistic evangelism.³ This hypocrisy is recognizable to anybody who has firsthand experience of the so-called narcotic; which, as the reader may have noticed, I have termed an herb, which it is—a leaf or blossom—in order to switch away from negative terminology and inaccurate language.

A marvelous project for a sociologist, and one which I am sure will be in preparation before my generation grows old, will be a close examination of the actual history and tactics of the Narcotics Bureau and its former chief power, Harry J. Anslinger, in planting the seed of the marijuana "menace" in the public mind and carefully nurturing its growth in the course of a few decades until the unsuspecting public was forced to accept an outright lie.⁴ I am not a thorough patient sociologist and this is not my task here, so I will limit myself to telling a few stories from personal experience, or relating stories that have been told me.

I must begin by explaining something that I have already said in public for many years: that I occasionally use marijuana in preference to alcohol, and have for several decades. I say occasionally and mean it quite literally; I have spent about as many hours high as I have spent in movie theaters—sometimes 3 hours a week, sometimes 12 or 20 or more, as at a film festival—with about the same degree of alteration of my normal awareness.

To continue, I therefore do know the subjective possibilities of marijuana and therein take evidence of my own senses between my own awareness of the mysterious ghastly universe of joy, pain, discovery, birth and death, the emptiness and awesomeness of its forms and consciousness described in the *Prajnaparamita Sutra* central to a Buddhist or even Christian or Hindu view of Kosmos which I sometimes experience while high, as for the last two paragraphs, and the cheap abstract inexperienced version of exactly the same thing one may have read in the newspapers, written by reporters (who smoke pot themselves occasionally

nowadays) taking the main part of their poorly written squibs of misinformation from the texts and mouths of Chiefs of Narcotics Bureaus, Municipal or Federal—or an occasional doctor notorious for his ungracious stupidity and insulting manners.

One doctor, facing me across a microphone in a radio broadcasting booth on a six o'clock chat show, pre-recorded, opened our conversation reading aloud a paragraph of *Kaddish* (a poem I had written in memory of my mother, and a tribute to her which made my own father weep; a text widely read, set to music or anthologized in portions, translations of which had met with some critical approval in various languages—Spanish, French, Italian and German, by now some Bengali or Hebrew; a text which I submitted as among my major poems in applying for monies from great foundations; a text applauded in recitation before academies; a text recorded for a large commercial business establishment's circulation; a text which I'd spent months daily transcribing as a movie scenario—in short a straightforward piece of communication integrating the subjective and objective, private and public, and what is common between them)—disapproving and confused—declared firmly that the dashes used as this—indicated that the broken measures of phrase—moment-to-moment consciousness during which syntax and meaning and direction of the—pauses for thought—were a sign of marijuana intoxication and were incomprehensible. He could not follow the thought. He said, as I remember—marijuana retains associations and goes from one thought to another if verbalized—that I was, in fact, quite mad.

Such a notion I thought quite mad on his part; my mother had been that. They were both quite insistent in their obsessions, or opinions, and sometimes harsh and premature in their judgments. This doctor and my mother did not differ so much from myself; the announcer was sympathetic to both of us. After the show I got quite angry with the doctor—it seemed quite a self-righteous remark; but I suppose I could not match his Power by any other means at the moment and felt that frankness and a show of emotion might shake his composure—alas, I yelled Fascist in his face, and had to be reprimanded by my companion Mr. Orlovsky for losing my temper with the doctor. I have a most excellent reason in such cases and so calmed myself, but I did believe that he was a quack-mind of sorts and a sort of negative judger with professional credentials. I had as friends many psychiatrists who treated me as interesting and no madder

than themselves; and had in fact graduated from 8 months in a psychiatric institute to be told smilingly by a doctor that I was not schizophrenic but in fact a bearable neurotic, like many other people—but this was years earlier when I was a poet with a tie and an obsession with eternity. True, I had changed much in the intervening 13 years, I had pursued my thoughts to India and was now satisfied with my self and bodily existence, and a little more in harmony with desire for life, I had begun singing mantras daily—Hindu practice of *japa* and *kirtan*—and I had smoked a lot of marijuana in those years; but I had not, despite my odd little biography in *Who's Who*, maintained so much confusion over my identity as to forget to end a sentence, if I wished to, tying together simultaneous association and language and memory with correct punctuation and obvious thought for the reader (to make it obvious, I am doing it now): I had not so much changed and broken away from communication from my fellow selves on earth that anyone should judge me mad. His remark (on the radio) only made me feel slightly paranoid; and I suppose it is no cure to try to make the other fellow feel paranoid, so perhaps I misunderstood the doctor and must take a charitable position and assume that I am Mad (or Not-Mad) but that the doctor also misunderstood my syntax; and judged too abruptly before the revelations possible thru pot had been deciphered . . . In any case I had *not* been high on marijuana when *Kaddish* was composed. The original mss. were bought by New York University library and are clearly labeled as written primarily under the influence of amphetamines, more popularly known as Benzedrine or Dexedrine, familiar to many a truck driver, doctor, student, housewife, and harried business executive and soldier in battle—a common experience not generally termed mad.

The mind does wander and that's another way around; to give by example a manifestation of the precise record of the effects of marijuana during composition on the subject itself, showing the area of reality traversed, so that the reader may see that it is a harmless gentle shift to a "more direct, slower, absorbing, occasionally microscopically minute, engagement with sensing phenomena"—in *this* case the phenomenon of transmuting to written language a model of the marijuana experience, which can be understood and related to in some mode by those who have not yet met the experience but who are willing to slow their thought and judgment and decipher the syntax clause by clause; not necessarily as slowly as composed, so the affect will differ; and of course

two bodies cannot, they say, occupy the same place in space. Yet in another light, they say we are one being of thought and to that common being—perceived in whatever mode one perceives—I address this syntax.⁵

Returning to the mundane world of order,⁶ may I compare the mental phenomena of the preceding anecdote with the criminal view of it as presented by the Narcotics Department for years in cheap sex magazines and government reports—reports uninfluenced by the Narco Department take a contrasting view⁷—base paranoia close to murder, frothing at the mouth of Egyptian dogs, sex orgies in cheap dives, debilitation and terror and physiological or mysterious psychic addiction. An essentially grotesque image, a thought-hallucination magnified myriad thru mass media, a by-product of fear—something quite fiendish—“Dope Fiend,” the old language, a language abandoned in the early sixties when enough of the general public had sufficient personal experience to reject such palpable poppycock and the bureaucratic line shifted to defense of its own existence with the following reason⁸: necessary to control marijuana because smoking leads to search for thrill kicks; this leads to next step, the monster heroin. And a terrible fate.⁹

In sound good health I smoked legal *ganja* (as marijuana is termed in India where it is traditionally used in preference to alcohol), bought from government tax shops in Calcutta, in a circle of devotees, yogis, and hymn-singing pious *Shivaist* worshippers in the burning ground at Nimtallah ghat in Calcutta, where it was the custom of these respected gentlemen to meet on Tuesday and Saturday nights, smoke before an improvised altar of blossoms, sacramental milk-candy and perhaps a fire taken from the burning wooden bed on which lay a newly dead body, of some friend perhaps, likely a stranger if a corpse is a stranger, pass out the candy as God's gift to friend and stranger, and sing holy songs all night, with great strength and emotion, addressed to different images of the Divine Spirit. *Ganja* was there considered a beginning of *sadhana*¹⁰ by some; others consider the ascetic yogi Shiva himself to have smoked marijuana; on His birthday marijuana is mixed as a paste with almond milk by the grandmothers of pious families and imbibed as sacrament by this polytheistic nation, considered by some a holy society. The professors of English at Benares University brought me a bottle for the traditional night of *Shivaratri*, birthday of the Creator and Destroyer who is the patron god of this oldest continuously inhabited city on earth. “*Bom Bom*

Mahadev!” (Boom Boom Great God!) is the mantra yogis' cry as they raise the *ganja* pipe to their brows before inhaling.

All India is familiar with *ganja*, and so is all Africa, and so is all the Arab world; and so were Paris and London in smaller measure in high-minded but respectable 19th-century circles; and so on a larger scale is America even now. Young and old, millions perhaps smoke marijuana and see no harm. And we have not measured the Latin-American world, Mexico particularly, who gave the local herb its familiar name. In some respects we may then see its prohibition as an arbitrary cultural taboo.

There has been a tendency toward its suppression in the Arab world with the too hasty adoption of Western rationality and the enlarged activity of the American fanatic Mr. Anslinger as US representative to the UN World Health Organization Single Narcotics Commission—a position from which he circulates hysterical notices and warnings, manufactured in Washington's Treasury Department, to the police forces of the cities of the world—so I was told by a police official in Tel Aviv, an old school chum who laughed about the latest release, a grim warning against the dangers of *khat*, a traditional energizing leaf chewed by Bedouins of Arabia and businessmen and princes in Ethiopia, as well as a few traditional Yemenite Jews.

There seems to be a liaison between Anslinger and some policemen in Egypt, which has now formally outlawed its hashish or *kif* form of marijuana (even though masses of nondrinking faithful Muslims prefer a contemplative pipe of *kif* to the dangers of violent alcohol forbidden by the Koran). We find government bureaucrats with the well-to-do (as in India) taking knowing delight in alcohol as a more sophisticated and *daring* preference; and stories of mad dogs frothing at the mouth and asylums full of people driven mad by some unheard-of brand of hashish (would god it were imported to America like some fine brand of Scotch or pernod) circulated from the police information bureaus of Egypt—or perhaps some single cranky Egyptian Dr. Baird—thru the Treasury Department Narcotics Bureau and thence by interview and press release to the mass media of America and an inexperienced public (encouraged to drink intoxicating beer by millions of dollars' worth of advertisement). The Egyptian evidence has been quoted for years, most recently by the present head of the Narcotics Bureau, a Mr. Giordano, one of Mr. Anslinger's former intimates in the department.

Professor Lindesmith has already objected in public print to the

Department's manipulation and attempted quashing of various medical-judicial reports; a Canadian documentary film on the drug subject has been blocked from being shown in this country thru activity of the Treasury Department—perhaps an import license was refused; the impartial LaGuardia Report was rudely attacked by Anslinger; a President's Judicial Advisory Council Policy Statement (1964) has characterized the activities of the Bureau as exceeding legal rightfulness in "criminalizing" by executive fiat and administrative dictum those addicted to addicting drugs who for decades have been prevented from going to a doctor for treatment unless it was under the aegis of Lexington jail and thru police channels. Memory of the British East India Hemp Commission report, the largest in history, done in the 1880s, which concluded that marijuana was *not* a problem, has been ignored,¹¹ memories of our own Panama Canal military reports giving marijuana a clean bill of health have been unavailing in consideration of the Bureau,¹² doctors have complained of being harassed and framed by one or another police agency; sick junkies have died in jail; thousands of intelligent citizens have been put in prison for uncounted years for possession or sale of marijuana,¹³ even if they grew it themselves and only smoked in private; youths have been entrapped into selling small or large quantities of grass to police agents and consequently found themselves faced with all the venomous bullshit that an arbitrary law can create from the terrors of arrest to the horror of years in jail; the author receives letters of complaint and appeals for help from many US cities, from acquaintances, fellow litterateurs, even scholarly investigators of the subject writing books about it, as well as from one energetic poet founding a fine project for an Artist's Workshop (John Sinclair in Detroit, sentenced to 6 months for letting an agent buy marijuana for the second time)—one becomes awed by the enormity of the imposition.¹⁴

It is not a healthy activity for the State to be annoying so many of its citizens thusly; it creates a climate of topsy-turvy law and begets disrespect for the law and the society that tolerates execution of such barbarous law,¹⁵ and a climate of fear and hatred for the administrators of the law. Such a law is a threat to the existence of the State itself, for it sickens and debilitates its most adventurous and sensitive citizens. Such a law, in fact, can drive people mad.

It is no wonder then that most people who have smoked marijuana in

America often experience a state of anxiety, of threat, of paranoia in fact, which may lead to trembling or hysteria, at the microscopic awareness that they are breaking a law, that thousands of investigators all over the country are trained and paid to smoke them out and jail them, that thousands of their community are in jail, that inevitably a few friends are "busted" with all the hypocrisy and expense and anxiety of that trial and perhaps punishment—jail and victimage by the bureaucracy that made, propagandized, administers, and profits from such a monstrous law.

From my own experience and the experience of others I have concluded that most of the horrific affects and disorders described as characteristic of marijuana "intoxication" by the US Federal Treasury Department's Bureau of Narcotics are, quite the reverse, precisely traceable back to the effects on consciousness not of the narcotic but of the law and the threatening activities of the US Bureau of Narcotics itself. Thus, as the Buddha said to a lady who offered him a curse, the gift is returned to the giver when it is not accepted.

I myself experience this form of paranoia when I smoke marijuana, and for that reason smoke it in America more rarely than I did in countries where it is legal. I noticed a profound difference of affect in my case. The anxiety was directly traceable to fear of being apprehended and treated as a deviant criminal and put thru the hassle of social disapproval, ignominious Kafkian tremblings in vast court buildings coming to be judged, the helplessness of being overwhelmed by force or threat of deadly force and put in brick and iron cell.

This apprehension deepened when on returning this year from Europe I was stopped, stripped, and searched at customs. The dust of my pockets was examined with magnifying glass for traces of weed. I had publicly spoken in defense of marijuana and attacked the conduct of the Bureau, and now my name was down on a letter dossier at which I secretly peeked, on the customs search-room desk. I quote the first sentence, referring to myself and Orlovsky: "These persons are reported to be smuggling (or importing) narcotics . . ."

On a later occasion, when I was advised by several friends and near-acquaintances that Federal Narcotics personnel in New York City had asked them to "set me up" for an arrest, I became incensed enough to write a letter of complaint to my Congressman. He replied that he thought I was being humorless about the reason for my being on a list for customs investigation, since it was natural (I had talked about the

dread subject so much in public); anyway, not Kafkaian as I characterized it. As for my complaint about being set up—that, with my letter, was forwarded to the Treasury Department in Washington for consideration and reply.¹⁶ I had schemed writing some essay such as this in addition to a letter of reminder to my Representative, for it would be to my safety to publish.

I had had the earlier experience after a nationwide TV discussion show, during which the moderator, John Crosby, the anthropologist Ashley Montagu, and celebrated fellow-writer Norman Mailer all concluded—perhaps for the first time over a nationally publicized medium of communication in the last three decades—that as far as we knew there was nothing wrong with marijuana—of learning that the Treasury Department, true to its obsession, had forced its opinion back on the medium thru a seven-minute video-taped refutation (including an incredible rehash of the Egyptian mad dogs), and placed it on the air against the wishes of Mr. Crosby on the insistence of his network, which had received a communication from the Narco Bureau, possibly thru intervention of FCC. Years later I read an account of the incident by Mr. Crosby in his syndicated column, formally complaining about the affair.¹⁷

At that time, looking forward to the occasion of this essay, a difficult one, I made a preliminary epistle on the subject to Anslinger himself, a ten-page composition saying I thought he was a dangerous fraud, responsible for untold death and suffering, and that some day soon, those who had experience of the matter would band together with reasoning and documentation—such as one may find in this book—to come out in the open to explain the actual horror of the US Treasury Department Federal Narcotic Bureau to an already suspecting public.

Allen Ginsberg
2 A.M. Nov. 14, 1965

II

Rather than alter the preceding composition—let it remain, for the reader who has not smoked marijuana, a manifestation of marijuana-high thought structure in a mode which intersects our mutual consciousness, namely language—the author wishes to add here a few thoughts.

The author has spent half a year in Morocco, smoking *kif* often: old gentlemen and peaceable youths sit amiably, in cafés or under shade trees in outdoor gardens drinking mint tea, passing the tiny *kif* pipe, and looking quietly at the sea. This is the true picture of the use of *kif* in North Africa, exactly the opposite of the lurid stereotype of mad-dog human beings deliberately spread by our Treasury Department police branch. And I set this model of tranquil sensibility beside the tableau of aggravated New York executives sipping whiskey before a 1966 TV set's imagery of drunken American violence covering the world from the highways to Berkeley all the way to the dirt roads of Vietnam.

No one has yet remarked that the suppression of Negro rights, culture, and sensibility in America has been complicated by the marijuana laws. African sects have used pot for divine worship (much as I have described its sacred use in India). And to the extent that jazz has been an adaptation of an African religious form to American context (and will have been in no small measure the salvation of America, if America survives the decades of coming change), marijuana has been closely associated with the development of this indigenous American form of chant and prayer. Use of marijuana has always been widespread among the Negro population in this country, and suppression of its use, with constant friction and bludgeoning of the law, has been one of the major unconscious, or unmentionable, methods of suppression of Negro rights. The mortal sufferings of our most celebrated heroic Negro musicians, from Billie Holiday thru Thelonious Monk, at the hands of police over the drug issue are well known. Such sadistic persecutions have outraged the heart of America for decades. I mean the cultural and spiritual heart—US music.

Although most scientific authors who present their reputable evidence for the harmlessness of marijuana make no claim for its surprising *usefulness*, I do make that claim:

Marijuana is a useful catalyst for specific optical and aural aesthetic perceptions. I apprehended the structure of certain pieces of jazz and classical music in a new manner under the influence of marijuana, and these apprehensions have remained valid in years of normal consciousness. I first discovered how to see Klee's *Magic Squares* as the painter intended them (as optically 3-dimensional space structures) while high on marijuana. I perceived ("dug") for the first time Cézanne's "petit sensation" of space achieved on a 2-dimensional canvas (by means of

advancing and receding colors, organization of triangles, cubes, etc. as the painter describes in his letters) while looking at *The Bathers* high on marijuana. And I saw anew many of nature's panoramas and landscapes that I'd stared at blindly without even noticing before; thru the use of marijuana, awe and detail were made conscious. These perceptions are permanent—any deep aesthetic experience leaves a trace, and an idea of what to look for that can be checked back later. I developed a taste for Crivelli's symmetry; and saw Rembrandt's *Polish Rider* as a sublime youth on a deathly horse for the first time—saw myself in the rider's face, one might say—while walking around the Frick Museum high on pot. These are not "hallucinations"; these are deepened perceptions that one might have catalyzed not by pot but by some *other* natural event (as natural as pot) that changes the mind, such as an intense love, a death in the family, a sudden clear dusk after rain, or the sight of the neon spectral reality of Times Square one sometimes has after leaving a strange movie. So it's all *natural*.

At this point it should be announced that most of the major (best and most famous too) poets, painters, musicians, cinéasts, sculptors, actors, singers and publishers in America and England have been smoking marijuana for years and years. I have gotten high with the majority of the dozens of contributors to the Don Allen *Anthology of New American Poetry 1945-1960*; and in years subsequent to its publication have sat down to coffee and a marijuana cigarette with not a few of the more academic poets of the rival Hall-Pack-Simpson anthology. No art opening in Paris, London, New York, or Wichita at which one may not sniff the incense-fumes of marijuana issuing from the ladies' room. Up and down Madison Avenue it is charming old inside knowledge; in the clacketing vast city rooms of newspapers on both coasts, copyboys and reporters smoke somewhat less marijuana than they take tranquilizers or Benzedrine, but pot begins to rival liquor as a non-medicinal delight in conversation. Already 8 years ago I smoked marijuana with a couple of Narcotics Department plainclothesmen who were trustworthy enough to invite to a literary reception. A full-page paid advertisement in the *New York Times*, quoting authoritative medical evidence of the harmlessness of marijuana, and signed by a thousand of its most famous smokers; would once and for all break the cultural ice and end once and for all the tyranny of the Treasury Department Narcotics Bureau. For it would only manifest in public what everybody sane in the centers of communi-

cation in America knows anyway, an enormous open secret—that it is time to end Prohibition again. And with it put an end to the gangsterism, police mania, hypocrisy, anxiety, and national stupidity generated by administrative abuse of the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937.

It should be understood once and for all that in this area we have been undergoing police-state conditions in America, with characteristic mass brainwashing of the public, persecution and deaths in jails, elaborate systems of plainclothes police and police spies and stool pigeons, abuse of constitutional guarantees of privacy of home and person (even *mode of consciousness*) from improper search and seizure. The police prohibition of marijuana (accompanied with the even more obnoxious persecution of sick heroin addicts who all along should have been seeing the doctor) has directly created vast black markets, crime syndicates, crime waves in the cities, and a breakdown of law and order in the State itself. For the courts of large cities are clogged with so-called narcotic crimes and behind schedule, and new laws (such as the recent NY Rockefeller Stop and Frisk and No-Knock) spring up against the citizen to cope with the massive unpopularity of prohibition.

Not only do I propose end of prohibition of marijuana, and total shift of treatment of actually addictive drugs to the hands of the medical profession, but I propose a total dismantling of the whole cancerous bureaucracy that has perpetrated this historic fuck-up on the United States. And not only is it necessary that the Bureau of Narcotics be dismantled and consigned to the wax-museum of history, where it belongs, but it is also about time that a full-scale Congressional investigation, utilizing all the resources of the embattled medical, legal and sociological authorities, who for years have been complaining in vain, should be undertaken to fix the precise responsibility for this vast swindle on the administrative, business and mass-media shoulders where it belongs. What was the motive and method in perpetrating this insane hoax on public consciousness? Have any laws of malfeasance in public office been violated?

Not only an investigation of how it all happened but some positive remuneration is required for those poor citizens, many of them defenseless against beatings, sickness, and anxiety for years—a minority directly and physically persecuted by the police of every city and state and by agents of the nation; a minority often railroaded to jail by uncomprehending judges for months, for years, for decades; a minority battling idiotic laws, and even then without adequate legal representation for the

slim trickery available to the rich to evade such laws. Pension must be made obviously for the cornered junkies. But for the inoffensive charming smokers of marijuana who have undergone disgraceful jailings, money is due as compensation. This goes back decades for thousands and thousands of people who, I would guess, are among the most sensitive citizens of the nation; and their social place and special honor of character should be rewarded by a society which urgently needs this kind of sensibility where it can be seen in public.

I have long felt that there were certain political implications to the suppression of marijuana, beyond the obvious revelation (which Burroughs pointed out in *Naked Lunch*) of the cancerous nature of the marijuana-suppression bureaucracy. When the citizens of this country see that such an old-time, taken-for-granted, flag-waving, reactionary truism of police, press, and law as the "reefer menace" is in fact a creepy hoax, a scarecrow, a national hallucination emanating from the perverted brain of one single man (perhaps) such as Anslinger, what will they begin to think of the whole of taken-for-granted public REALITY?

What of other issues filled with the same threatening hysteria? The spectre of Communism? Respect for the police and courts? Respect for the Treasury Department? If marijuana is a hoax, what is Money? What is the War in Vietnam? What are the Mass Media?

As I declared at the beginning of this essay, marijuana consciousness shifts attention from stereotyped verbal symbols to "more direct, slower, absorbing, occasionally microscopically minute engagement with sensing phenomena during the high . . ." Already millions of people have got high and looked at the images of their Presidents and governors and representatives on television and seen that all were betraying signs of false character. Or heard the impersonal robot tones of radio newscasters announcing mass deaths in Asia.

It is no wonder that for years the great centers of Puritanism of consciousness, blackout and persecution of the subtle vibrations of personal consciousness catalyzed by marijuana have been precisely Moscow and Washington, the centers of the human power war. Fanatical rigid mentality pursuing abstract ideological obsessions make decisions in the right-wing mind of America, pursuing a hateful war against a mirror-image of the same "sectarian, dogmatic" ideological mentality in the Communist camp. It is part of the same pattern that both centers of power have the most rigid laws against marijuana. And that marijuana

and versions of the African ritual music (rock 'n' roll) are slowly catalyzing anti-ideological consciousness of the new generations on both sides of the Iron-Time curtain.

I believe that future generations will have to rely on new faculties of awareness, rather than on new versions of old idea-systems, to cope with the increasing godlike complexity of our planetary civilization, with its overpopulation, its threat of atomic annihilation, its centralized network of abstract word-image communication, its power to leave the earth. A new consciousness, or new awareness, will evolve to meet a changed ecological environment. It has already begun evolving in younger generations from Prague to Calcutta; part of the process is a re-examination of certain heretofore discarded "primitive" devices of communication with Self and Selves. Negro worship rituals have invaded the West via New Orleans and Liverpool, in altered but still recognizably functional form. The consciousness-expanding drugs (psychedelics) occupy attention in the highest intellectual circles of the West, as well as among a great mass of youth. The odd perceptions of Zen, Tibetan yoga, mantra yoga, and indigenous American Shamanism affect the consciousness of a universal generation, children who can recognize each other by hairstyle, tone of voice, attitude to nature, and attitude to Civilization. The airwaves are filled with songs of hitherto unheard-of frankness and beauty.

These then are some of the political or social implications of the legalization of marijuana as a catalyst to self-awareness. The generalizations I have made may also apply to the deeper affects and deeper social changes that may be catalyzed thru the already massive use of psychedelic drugs.

And it is significant that, as marijuana was once monopolized by a small rabid bureaucracy in the Treasury Department, the psychedelic drugs have this year in America been officially monopolized by the Pure Food and Drug Administration—within months a large amateur police force has mushroomed. I've heard it rumored that the precise group of citizens *least* equipped for "responsibility" in this area—the *least* "mature" pressure-group in the States—already acts in an advisory capacity on licensing. This group is the Chemical Warfare Division of the Pentagon.